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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2007

In Today's Papers

Erdogan on the PKK, Turkish Incursion into Northern Iraq
All papers report on a statement released Tuesday following the security "summit" held under Prime Minister Erdogan with the participation of Turkish General Staff (TGS) chief Yasar Buyukanit, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, Interior Minister Osman Gunes, Land Forces Commander General Ilker Basbug and Gendarme Commander General Isik Kosaner. The statement said "Turkish people have displayed a firm unity against terrorist actions. It is important to maintain this spirit of solidarity and determination." It also underlined there was a "harmonious cooperation" among the government, military, and police forces in fighting against terrorism.

Papers report Prime Minister Erdogan later also said a military incursion into northern Iraq is the final measure to be applied in the fight against the PKK terrorists, stressing Turkey was focused on fighting the terrorists domestically rather than in Iraq. "There are 500 terrorists in northern Iraq, and 5,000 in the mountains of Turkey. Has the fight with those in Turkey finished, that we should now be talking about Iraq?" Erdogan told the press. Responding to a question on the Nationalist Movement Party's (MHP) proposal to close down the Habur Gate border crossing and cut the Turkish supply of electricity to northern Iraq, Erdogan said there are Turkish contractors in the region, and that the MHP should consider their interests.

On protests at Monday's funerals of three soldiers killed by the PKK, Erdogan said such protests were "inappropriate" during funerals of martyrs. "No one should be allowed to benefit from funerals of martyrs for their own political purposes. The Interior Ministry has launched an investigation into protests," Erdogan noted.

Papers also report Secretary Rice warned against a Turkish military operation, saying an incursion into northern Iraq will "not give good results" for Turkey.

Editorial Commentary on Possible Turkish Incursion into Northern Iraq

Ismet Berkan wrote in the liberal-intellectual daily Radikal: "Turkey, even with some drawbacks and room for improvement, is a democracy and ruled by the supremacy of law. Like any country with a democratic regime, every state institution functions under defined roles and responsibilities. In the past, the Turkish military sustained its fight against PKK terrorism through manpower as well as technology. However, the circumstances are different now, especially when it comes to technology. PKK terrorists have started using improvised explosive device technology similar to what the US army is struggling to cope with in Iraq. The Turkish army has not yet developed a tactical supremacy to handle this new technology and situation. Therefore, the military should focus on this aspect. As for the cross border operation issue, there are so many voices around, including some very irrational ones. Let's face it: A strong call for a cross border operation (CBO) means a declaration of war. The fact that the call for a CBO is even being made by Turkish General Staff increases the problem because it is not the duty of TGS to formulate foreign policy. Don't we have a government and a parliament in charge of foreign policy, including the declaration of war? Everybody should focus on his or her own responsibilities and remain within those defined boundaries. That's what we need."

Sami Kohen wrote in the mainstream daily Milliyet: "There has been too much talk about the possibility of a cross border operation in northern Iraq. Given the border activities, terrorist attacks and military build-up, it seems an operation is inevitable sooner or later. Turkey could have carried out a fast and limited operation in northern Iraq just as in the 1990s. If that were the case, there would not be too much opposition from the international public. Yet, the question we have to think over is whether such a

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limited-scale operation would end the PKK presence in Iraq. Another question is about defining the targets in northern Iraq. If and when the Turkish army enters northern Iraq, will it be dealing with sweeping out the PKK or will it have to deal with regional Kurdish leaders at the same time? There are circles in Turkey who feel very disturbed over the Kurdish entity in northern Iraq and stance of Kurdish leaders there. According to them, Turkey should include regional Kurdish figures in the targets category. Of course, it is debatable to what extent such an approach would serve Turkish foreign policy interests. In any case, signs related to a cross border operation indicate that even if Turkey carries one out, it will be limited only to the PKK presence in northern Iraq."

Paper: US Wants to 'Part Ways' with Maliki
Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak claims the US, having changed two prime ministers in Iraq over the last three years, is now "trying to part ways" with Nouri al-Maliki. The paper cites The New York Times as reporting that US Middle East forces commander Admiral William Fallon warned Maliki to make "concrete political developments" in a month, warning the Iraqi PM that otherwise, he could "anger" the US Congress. The long-awaited hydrocarbon law envisages division of oil revenues among regions in the country, says Yeni Safak.

NATO's Scheffer Meets Gul

Cumhuriyet, Star, Zaman, Radikal, Milliyet: In a press conference after a meeting with NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer, Gul said issues like Afghanistan, Europe, Kosovo, and Turkish-NATO relations were discussed at the meeting. "Turkey attaches great importance to cooperation with NATO. Turkey is a 50-year member and one of the essential allies of NATO", added Gul. De Hoop Scheffer reiterated support for the Turkish fight against terrorism. De Hoop Scheffer also met with PM Erdogan, Parliament Speaker Arinc, Defense Minister Gonul and Chief of General Staff Buyukanit. During the visit, Turkish officials expressed Turkey's uneasiness over its exclusion from decision-making and command mechanisms in the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) operations, as well as the Greek-Cypriot participation in the ESDP.

Al Gore in Istanbul for a Conference on Global Warming
Milliyet, Yeni Safak, Star, Zaman, Radikal, Milliyet: Former US Vice President Al Gore was in Istanbul yesterday to support Live

Earth concerts to raise awareness of global climate change. Istanbul is among nine cities around the world holding concerts on July 7. Mainstream Milliyet reports that Gore visited the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate yesterday for twenty minutes and said 'It is an honor and very important for me to pay a visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Because he includes in his prayers the importance of protecting everything God created, Patriarchate Bartholomew is addressed as 'Green Patriarch''. The Patriarchate is part of the heritage of the world metropolis of Istanbul.'

US 2006 Human Trafficking Report

Milliyet, Sabah and Cumhuriyet report the US 2006 Report on Human Trafficking praised Turkey's efforts to prevent trafficking in persons, but also underlined shortcomings in areas such as collecting data and penalizing state officials involved in such activities. The report says Turkey has become a transit route for women from the former Soviet republics and central Europe who are taken to Turkish Cyprus as "sexual workers".

TV Highlights

NTV (6 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Visiting Italian Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema will meet President Sezer, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc and CHP chairman Deniz Baykal on Wednesday. Gul and D'Alema will hold a joint news conference following their meeting.

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- Based on reports of a Belgium-based Kurdish news agency, Associated Press said the PKK declared Tuesday it would halt attacks, but added that its fighters would defend themselves if attacked by Turkish forces.

- The Turkish military will use air transportation to dispatch troops to the Iraqi border in a move to avoid PKK landmines.

- A Turkish F-5 military plane has crashed near the Kuyubasi village in Konya province. The pilot escaped the crash unhurt.

International News

- French police have detained eight suspected members of the PKK in and around Paris under a probe into attacks against Turkish owned bars and cultural associations. The detainees, aged between 17 and 29, are suspected of being members of the PKK's youth organizations.

- Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said Iran will make the US "regret" its detention of five Iranians in Iraq since January this year.

- Hamas declared northern and central Gaza a "closed military zone" on Tuesday after bloody clashes that killed at least 20 Palestinians over the weekend.

- President Ahmadinejad has appointed a 15-member advisory council to create a compilation of his "works and opinions" to be issued as books, CDs and pamphlets.

WILSON